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Tithing Explained: Does God require us to give?

Jon Rychener

What is the tithe?

Genesis 14:18-20 (NIV): Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Leviticus 27:30 (NIV): "A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord."

Numbers 18:20-21 (NIV): The Lord said to Aaron, "You will have no inheritance in their land, nor will you have any share among them; I am your share and your inheritance among the Israelites. I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the tent of meeting."

Numbers 18:26 (NIV): "Speak to the Levites and say to them: 'When you receive from the Israelites the tithe I give you as your inheritance, you must present a tenth of that tithe as the Lord's offering.'"

Are Christians obligated to adhere to Old Testament tithing laws?

Should Christians give back to God a portion of their finances?

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 (NIV): Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

Truth #1: Giving is fueled by God's grace, not human goodness.

2 Corinthians 8:1 (NIV): And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.

Truth #2: Giving is connected to the attitude of my heart and not the circumstance of my life.

2 Corinthians 8:2-4 (NIV): In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people.

Acts 20:35 (NIV): "...It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Truth #3: Giving starts with the gift of giving my heart, not my money.

2 Corinthians 8:5 (NIV): And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

Matthew 23:23 (NIV): “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.”

Truth #4: Giving is to be excelled in, not excused away.

2 Corinthians 8:6-7 (NIV): So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.